Amateur Radio Newsline™ Report 1407 - July 30, 2004

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1407 with a release date of Friday, July 30, 2004 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. The ham bands get clobbered by the sun and some of the results are amazing. Find out the details on Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1407 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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ON THE AIR: GEOMAGNETIC STORM AND HAM RADIO

A huge geomagnetic storm has hit the Earth, wiping out a lot of High Frequency communications. At the same time its making the VHF and UHF bands a veritable D-X playground. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, has more:

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According to a propagation bulletin issued on July 25th by CQ Magazine's Tomas Hood, NW7US, the estimated planetary K index reached a level of 8, with the Bolder, Colorado K reading a level 7. Translated into everyday talk, that's one heck of a solar storm and it does odd things to radio communications. All you need do is turn on a 6 or 2 meter CW or SSB radio to hear it for yourself.

Solar storms bring with them an increase in Aurora and Aurora based communications. Reports over the VHF Reflector say that this one was no exception. According to Dave Wenner, K3KEL, in Benton, Pennsylvania, his 150 watts to a homebrew 9 element Quagi antenna made it possible for him to make dozens of 144 Mhz contacts. These ranged from Maine across to Missouri plus Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Ontario Canada. Dave's posting said that he did not work any stations to the South but that they were there. He says that he heard K4QI in North Carolina's grid FM06 very strong toward the end of the session.

Wenner's was typical of the reports posted to the VHF Reflector. Many of them said that this was the best Aurora session heard in years.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, in Los Angeles.

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How long does a solar storm like this last? NW7US reports that as Saturday, July 25th progressed, the geomagnetic field again became highly active and reached storm levels. He says that it has continued to get more intense, reaching very high storm levels. As the week progressed more Aurora contacts were reported world -wide with some on the 222 Mhz band and above. (NW7US via VHF Reflector)

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PROPAGATION: IS THE SUN HARMING EARTH

Meantime the CGC Communicator cites an interesting propagation report. One that says Greenland's ice cores indicate that the sun is more active now than it has been at anytime in the past 1,000 years.

That report also says this has caused a warming trend here on Earth. As a result of this and other solar observations the pseudo-science doomsayers have been quick to jump on the gloom and doom bandwagon. They are out there predicting dyer consequences for those of us living here on the surface of our home planet Earth. But is any of this based on reality? That's what RAIN's Hap Holly asked CQ's Thomas Hood, NW7US:

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Audio report only. Hear it in the MP3 version of this newscast downloadable at http://www.arnewsline.org/quincy

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Hood says that you should enjoy the radio talk about the phenomena but not to take it seriously. (CGC, RAIN)

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ON THE AIR: THOMAS HOOD ON RAIN

By the way, you can learn a lot more about radio propagation and the effects of solar radiation on communications from Thomas Hood on this weeks RAIN Report. Its available right now on-line at

www.rainreport.com or on the phone at 847-827-7246. You can read the article referred to by the CGC Communicator at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3869753.stm (CGC, RAIN)

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VHF AND ABOVE: ARRL MULLS CVHF/UHF CONTEST RULES CHANGES

ARRL Director Tom Frenaye, K1KI, has also posted some interesting information to the VHF Reflector. He says that says that the work done by the VHF-UHF Contests/Awards Subcommittee has been completed. That the written report and along with some in-person additional comments were given during the ARRL Board's Program & Services Committee meeting on July 15th. That's just before the ARRL Board meeting that began on July 16th.

Frenaye says that the Program & Services Committee did not take action on the report and will study it during the next several weeks. In the mean time, the committee agreed with him that the report should be posted to the VHF reflector public consumption. It will also be sent to the Contest Advisory Committee for information and possible comment.

What will happen from here? Frenaye says that the Program & Services Committee will work with the Membership Services Department in Newington to take the recommendations any further. He says that some rules may changes and some may not. Except for possible changes to the 2004 E-M-E contest, K1KI does not believe you'll see any major contest VHF changes until 2005. He also notes that some recommendations may have to wait until budget resources are made available. The full ARRL Board does not normally get directly involved in contest rules issues as contest rules are usually not policy matters. (K1KI via the VHF Reflector)

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Break 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the K8KZO repeater serving Portage Michigan.

(5 sec pause here)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: ECHO ON THE AIR

I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, with some breaking news that hams worldwide have been waiting to hear. This, as AMSAT announces that its new Echo satellite, now renamed AO-51 will be turned on for general use in FM repeat mode on July 30th at about 02:15 UTC.

Echo will be on for a trial period of about three weeks. During that time command stations will be watching the power budget and adjusting the UHF transmitter output as needed for management of the battery supply. Initially, the transmitter will be running at about 1 watt but if all goes well it will be slowly increased during the trial period.

Echo's uplink is 145.920 MHz using FM voice with 67 Hz PL tone (CTCSS) required. The downlink is on 435.300 Mhz, also FM voice. And like many terrestrial repeaters the downlink transmitter will only come on when it hears an uplink signal with a 67 Hz PL tone for about 1 second. After the uplink signals drop away the downlink transmitter stays on for 10 seconds.   After that, the downlink signal goes away. You might say that the operation is just like a terrestrial FM repeater with a 1 second kerchunk filter and a 10 second hang time. The only difference is that this one is circleing the Earth in space.

Norm. (AMSAT)

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RESCUE RADIO: UK FIRE EVACUATION BRINGS OUT HAM RADIO

RAYNET, the United Kingdoms version of RACES was recently called out during a very hazardous materials fire. Jeramy Boot, G4NJH, has the details:

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On Monday the 5th of July at 19.55 BST Lancashire Emergency Planning called-out Rossendale Raynet to attend a Rest Centre in Colne. A fire at a building that contained an acetylene cylinder meant that local residents had to be evacuated.

About 40 people went to the Rest Centre but the majority were able to find accommodation for the night with friends or relatives. Social Services arranged accommodation for the remainder. Rossendale Raynet

was stood down at 22.08 when the Rest Centre closed for the night.

Im G4NJH in Nottingham.

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There were no injuries reported and the ham radio system worked flawlessly. (GB2RS)

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ENFORCEMENT: FCC INVESTIGATING 1999 EXAM SESSIONS

The FCC has ordered thirty-seven hams to sit for retests. This, as part of an ongoing investigation of ham radio examination sessions held in Yucaipa, California, back in 1999.

The tests under government scrutiny were administered by a W5YI exam team. The exact test dates involved are those held on February 27th, March 27th, April 24th, May 22nd, June 26th, and July 31st of 1999.

This is one of the largest retest orders issued since the all volunteer testing program got underway in the early 1980's. (FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: HAM SURRENDERS LICENSE

A now former ham involved in a licensing investigation has turned in his ticket to the FCC. The Agency's Daryl Duckworth, NN0W, explains:

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Frank C. Richards of Moers, New York, submitted his license KG2IJ for cancellation. In November of 1995 he had requested that the call sign KB4VU be changed to the next availlable and that the address be changed to Plattsburg, New York.

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The FCC says that the call KB4VU actually belongs to one Frank C.

Richards of Ft,. Meyers, Florida. It says that this Richards has never lived in New York and never requested that his callsign or address be changed.

After an investigation that lasted almost five months the New York Richards surrendered his ticket to the FCC on June 23rd. The FCC acknowledged receipt on July 6th noting that the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau has canceled that license and no further enforcement action is contemplated at this time. (FCC, RAIN)

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ENFORCEMENT: $11,000 FINE AFFIRMED AGAINST CALIFORNIA HAM

The FCC has affirmed an $11,000 fine issued to a California ham. One whom the agency says caused deliberate interference to repeaters and then refused to accept several certified letters from the Commission.

The target of the now affirmed fine is Daniel Granda, KA6VHC, of Whittier California. As previously reported, back on March 31st the District Director of the Commission's Los Angeles Field Office issued a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture alleging that Granda deliberately interfered with two different repeaters. It said that when FCC notices were sent by Certified Mail, they were returned as unclaimed. But the FCC says that copies sent by regular first-class mail were not returned by the post office.

The fine is $7,000 for the alleged interference and $4,000 for not responding to FCC notices. Granda was given the usual 30 days to pay or to file an appeal. (FCC)

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HAMVENTION: ARRL NATIONAL AND HAMVENTION COMBINE FOR 2005

Turning to the ham radio social scene, word that the ARRL has accepted an invitation from planners of Hamvention 2005 to bring the society's national convention back to Dayton.

According to General Chairman Gary Des Combes, N8EMO, ARRL Great Lakes Director Jim Weaver, K8JE, called shortly after the recent Board of Director's meeting. Weaver told Des Combes the League had accepted the invitation to hold the next ARRL National Convention at the 2005 Dayton Hamvention.

The combined show will take place next May 20th to the 22nd at its longtime home. That of coarse is the Hara Arena in suburban Dayton. (Hamvention©)

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CONVENTIONS: K7UGA ON THE AIR FROM ARRL SW DIV CON

And the call sign of the late Barry M. Goldwater will soon be heard again. This, as special events station K7UGA takes to the air from the Southwestern Division Convention in Phoenix, Arizona from August 27th to the 29th.

This will not only be a chance for convention attendees to operate Goldwater's original Collins S-Line equipment but also to take part in an oral history project about Senator Goldwater that will begin recording at the show. Also, Goldwater impersonator Ben Tyler will attend the convention on Saturday afternoon to present his Goldwater "Autobiography".

Again. it all takes place August 27th to the 29th in Phoenix, Arizona. We will see you there. (SW Division Communicator)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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ARNEWSLINE™ SUPPORT FUND REPORT WITH N6TCQ

Ladies and gentlemen, once again here is Amateur Radio Newsline's Support Fund Administrator, Andy Jarema, N6TCQ.

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Continuing with our thank-you for June, we heard from Tim, N9TO and Carol Toman, WD9CNW of Westmont, IL; Ted Tsucalas, W0RMJ of Littleton, CO; Turning to CA, Leo Halog, KR6EG of San Francisco; Doug Cannon of Livermore; Monthly contributor William Walters, WA2IBM, of San Jose; monthly contributor Scott Hensley of the Area Communications Team, also in San Jose; Art Protas, KG6AY of West Covina; John Rice, KE6YFV of San Pedro and the Rio Hondo ARC of Whittier.

Thank you to everyone, and we promise to do our best to continue to earn your care and support.

A reminder that Newsline is a 501(c)(3) and California non-profit corporation. FCC regulations prohibit us from telling you exactly how to support us, but that information is on our website at www.arnewsline.org. That address will be repeated at the end of the newscast.

I'm Andy Jarema, N6TCQ.

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Thank you Andy. (ARNewsline™ Support Fund)

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CHANGING OF THE GUARD: JOHN KRAUS, W8JK - SK

Some sad news to report. Word that noted astronomer and antenna designer John Kraus, W8JK, has become a Silent Key. According to reports from the ARRL and CQ Magazine, Kraus died on July 18 at age 94.

John Krasus was a member of the inaugural "class" of the CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame, a world-renowned radio astronomer and the father of the "Big Ear" radio telescope at Ohio State University. In the world of Amateur Radio he was perhaps best known as an antenna designer. His designs include the famous W8JK bi-directional wire beam as well as the helix and corner reflector antennas often used at UHF frequencies. (ARRL, CQ)

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KAHN STILL TRYING TO TEST CAM-D

Broadcast entrepreneur Leonard Kahn opposes the AM HD Radio IBOC system and has long promoted his Cam-D system as an alternative. In his latest filing with the FCC for the IBOC proceeding, Kahn reveals he tested his Cam-D system on Nebraska's 50 kilowatt KRVN at 880 kHz. However, he told Radio World Online that, some employees found the sound unacceptable and the tests were discontinued. For more on this story, see http://www.rwonline.com/dailynews/one.php?id=5511 (CGC)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: NEW KENWOOD ISS RADIO PROVES OUT FINE

The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station USA team has successfully completed a comprehensive checkout pass of the new Kenwood D700 radio system with Astronaut Mike Finke, KE5AIT. Utilizing ground stations in Greenbelt, Maryland, Orlando, Florida and Houston, Texas and linking team members in Kansas, Colorado, Maryland, Florida and Texas, the ARISS USA team performed voice and packet radio uplink tests to fully validate the Kenwood D700 system for future school group operations.

During the East Coast pass, the ARISS team were able to perform signal strength measurements and voice quality checks on 2 meters and 70 centimeters using the Kenwood D700 radio and the ARISS-built W A One antenna system. Mike Finke provided the on-board feedback to the team to help them understand how the
radio sounds on-orbit. Finke said that the signals from the 70 centimeter uplink signals were especially loud. (ARISS)

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WORLDBEAT - CANADA: RESTRUCTURING ON ITS WAY

Back on Earth, Canada appears ready to restructure its Amateur Radio service and work is well underway.

Following extensive discussions with Industry Canada, on July 23rd, Radio Amateurs of Canada formally submitted its Proposal on Morse Code and Related Matters to that regulatory agency. According to an Radio Amateurs of Canada press release, little changed from the draft proposal that was posted on the society's web site back in 2003.

Radio Amateurs of Canada says that it is now up to Industry Canada to respond to the proposal. The current version is on line in both English and French at www.rac.ca (RAC)

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WORLDBEAT - MEXICO: ALL N.A. ADOPTS U.S. HDTV STANDARD

Mexico has formally adopted the U.S. ATSC Digital Television Standard based on 8 VSB technology. This, for terrestrial broadcasting in that nation.

Canada adopted the same standard in 1997. The decision by Mexico to go along with the U-S and Canada means that ATSC is now the North American Digital Television standard. ATSC was also adopted by South Korea in November of 1997 and Argentina in October of 1998. More is on the web at http://www.atsc.org/news_information/press/2004/PR_Mexico_7-7-4.pdf (CGC)

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DX

In D-X, word that husband and wife team EA3BT and EA3WL will be active from the Gambia through the 4th of August. They plan to operate as C56BT and C56WL on 40 to 6 meters SSB. QSL as directed on the air.

And Steve Burrows, M5BXB, will be on from the Czech republic as OK8XB until the 6th of August. The OK8 prefix is quite rare, and Steve will be attempting to make at least 1,000 QSOs on the HF, 6 meters and on 2 meter's from a portable location on Lysa Hora. Thats site is 1,324 metres above sea level in grid square JN99FN.

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THAT FINAL ITEM: THE PHYSICS OF M&M'S

And finally this week the story of how a researcher with a sweet tooth has changed science. Amateur Radio Newsline Henry Feinberg, K2SSQ, has the rest of the story:

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Princeton physicist Paul Chaikin's passion for M&M candies was so well known that his students played a sweet practical joke on him. The left a 55 gallon drum of the candies in his office. Little did they know that their prank would lead to a physics breakthrough.

The journal Science says that the barrel full of the oblate little candies made Chaikin think about how well they packed in. A series of studies have shown they pack more tightly than perfect spheres. This is something that surprises many physicists and Chaikin himself. So Chaikin and his colleague, chemist Salvatore Torquato, used the candies to investigate the physical and mathematical principles involved when particles are poured randomly into a vessel.

The report in Science says they found that oblate spheroids like plain M&Ms pack surprisingly more densely than regular spheres when poured randomly and shaken. That spheres occupy about 64 percent of the space in a container. M&Ms manage to pack in at a density of about 68 percent.

But one of the researchers had a more philosophical view of the experiment. Salvatore Torquato said that to him it is remarkable that you an take this simple system with common candies and probe one of the deepest problems in condensed matter physics.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Henry Feinberg, K2SSQ, not to far from Princeton, New Jersey.

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According to news reports, Mars Inc., which makes M&Ms, did not help sponsor the research although it donated 125 pounds of M&Ms to the two scientists. (Journal of Science, Science Online)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's W-I-A News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline @arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Norm Seeley, KI7UP, saying 73 and we thank you for listening." Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) is Copyright 2004. All rights reserved.